BC Ministry of Transportation and Highways Newsletter

Road Runner

Volume 35, Issue 4 Fall 1999

Cape Horn/Port Mann
Breaking the bottleneck

For many Lower Mainland drivers, the Cape Horn interchange/Port Mann Bridge combination slows down smooth commuting. Located at the convergence of four heavily-traveled roads—Highway 1, the Lougheed Highway, the Mary Hill Bypass and United Boulevard—the bridge is congested for almost 15 hours each day.

However, relief is on the horizon for the drivers of some 120,000 vehicles using the four-lane Port Mann each day. Highways Minister Harry Lali announced earlier this year. "The fifth lane will mean a big improvement," he said. "All drivers using the bridge and interchange will see a big difference."

The Port Mann Bridge carries about 120,000 vehicles over the Fraser River daily. A fifth lane will be added to the bridge by moving the walkways to the outside of the metal arches and widening the concrete approach spans.

Cape Horn

The ministry has embarked on a $74-million project to improve traffic flow at the Cape Horn interchange and add a fifth lane to the Port Mann Bridge dedicated to eastbound high occupancy vehicle (HOV) traffic. This project, which is one of the major components of the 1999 BCTFA capital plan, will include widening Lougheed Highway from east of United Boulevard to the Cape Horn interchange.

Continued on page 4

On the eve of Y2K

With the clock ticking down to the arrival of the Year 2000, the information systems branch reports the ministry's application effort is 98 per cent complete.

The NT install initiative, one of the few remaining business priority projects, was completed in August. This major technology infrastructure project converted the entire ministry from the Windows 3.1 environment to NT 4.0. The final mission critical project, the Coquihalla toll booth, was completed in September.

Of 55 Y2K ISB-supported applications in the ministry, 54 have been completed. The remaining project, Y2K server upgrades, will be finished by the end of October.

All the applications should be Year 2000-ready by the end of September.

Completing this task has been no easy matter. Since April 1, 1996, 82,495 hours have been expended on Year 2000 work. Currently, 22 ministry staff and seven contractors are involved in the projects that are in progress.

Additional Year 2000 project information is available on the ministry's Intranet under:

Content/ITPlanning/ Year2000Project/Year2k.asp

Message from Har Singh, ADM management services

We can all be proud of the ministry's record of sound financial management over the last several years. The ministry has tried to adjust to the considerable changes to the level of funding without major disruptions to our employees. At the same time, we have met our overall budget targets, managing to within a fraction of one per cent for the last year.

During the past summer, the ministry hired more than 150 students on a temporary basis. Partly because we took the time to reach out to many community groups, we attracted a diverse and talented group, including young women, aboriginal people, people from multicultural backgrounds and people with disabilities. Regional staff and project staff made it happen.

In a related vein, the ministry is making a new effort to respond to the various special needs of our co-workers. Under a pilot program, we will look for ways to provide "reasonable accommodation" for physical disabilities, religious holidays or other considerations laid out in the B.C. Human Rights Code. You can find out more by contacting Julia Vaughn in the human resources branch, Victoria, at (250) 356-9410.

The Article 29 committee, a mechanism intended to identify and resolve staff concerns, will resume its regular meetings this fall. As co-chair of this committee, I welcome the ideas and suggestions that come forward from everyone at the table. Reports on committee meetings will appear in future issues of the Road Runner and at the human resources branch Intranet site.

Finally, a brief word on the Y2K project. After many months of hard work, it is now clear that all of our critical systems will be ready to face the year 2000. I take this opportunity to thank the many dedicated employees throughout the ministry and systems branch who worked to achieve this goal.

From the Archives

30-year career takes him around the province

Neville Hope, now.

After holding numerous positions around the province during his 30-year career with MoTH, Neville Hope is a familiar face to many ministry employees.

As the attached clipping from a 1974 Road Runner illustrates, Neville was on the move even as a young engineer, landing a job in Merritt after working in Prince Rupert and Burns Lake during his first four years with the ministry.

He remained in Merritt as district engineer/district highways manager for five years, but in 1978 packed his bags for Terrace, where he worked as the regional manager of maintenance. His next job allowed him to stay in the northwest region, where he worked as the regional director from 1985 to 1988—and did double-duty as regional director for the northeast for a six month period.

Neville Hope, then.

In 1988, he became the regional director for Vancouver Island, a post he still holds.

A mislabelled photo from our archives led to an erroneous cutline in the last issue of the Road Runner.

Pat Vandrishe, electrical trade supervisor in Hope, spotted our mistake right away. He wrote:

"I have just received a copy of the Road Runner and am pleased to see it back. I hope with continued input it will grow to be as interesting and informative as it has been in the past.

I did note that on page 7 the photo feature "From the Archives" states the aerial ferry from the 1960s was in Ashcroft, B.C.

Having serviced and maintained the electrical equipment on this ferry for several years, I can confirm that it was located in Boston Bar and ran across the river to the community of North Bend. To my knowledge, there never was an aerial ferry in or around Ashcroft. This aerial ferry was removed in 1985 and replaced by the Cog Harrington Bridge."

Thanks for setting us straight, Pat.

The Road Runner is produced entirely in-house by the communications branch of the Ministry of Transportation and Highways and may not be reprinted or republished without permission. Letters or contributions from staff are always welcome and should be submitted to Bruce Methven, communications branch, Ministry of Transportation and Highways, 5B-940 Blanshard St., Victoria, B.C. V8W 9T5. Phone: (250) 356-9048; Fax (250) 356-7706.

MoTH information highway paved for public

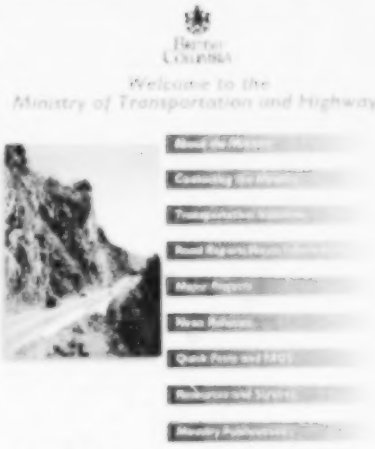
The secret is out: A user-friendly, self-guided virtual tour of the ministry is just a mouse-click away.

The MoTH Web site has become such a quick and easy source of information for the general public, media outlets and firms interested in doing business with the ministry it regularly records about 500 visits each day.

The site underwent a complete redesign about two years ago and is currently being updated to incorporate new provincial government design elements.

"I've always believed that form follows function," says graphics department technician Gord Smith, who helped revamp the site. "We've tried to ensure that the look and feel of the site guides the user in a logical and efficient way."

By far the site's most popular link is the one that provides round the clock information about road conditions throughout B.C. Many drivers routinely consult these reports to determine their route options when weather or construction activity could affect travelling times. The information is posted on the Web by ministry staff in the provincial highway conditions centre in Burnaby who work in shifts to compile road condition data and then monitor the site to ensure they are current and accurate. Another link provides details about seasonal load restrictions on northern routes.



The MoTH homepage sees hundreds of visits each day.

A wealth of information about the services provided by our friendly-yet-efficient ministry librarians, Del Rosario and Enza Pattison, can be accessed through links from the library resource centre site. Additional links in this section list new books, a video catalogue, an index to the Road Runner and professional papers and articles by MoTH personnel.

Another link from the ministry's home page provides a complete listing of recent publications and videos available for sale. A measure of the success of this particular site is the gross revenue to the ministry of over $150,000 from orders since fiscal 1998/99.

Another component of the site is an overview of ministry resources and services, including MoTH's video-conferencing and sign shop capabilities.

In addition, major projects like the Vancouver Island Highway Project, the Cache Creek to the Rockies program and the John Hart Bridge are also profiled on the site.

An e-mail link to the communications branch provides a 24-hour-a-day forum for a wide range of questions. Everything from, "How do I keep down the dust on my driveway?" and, "What is the fastest route from Calgary to Vancouver?" to complaints about urban traffic jams and questions about highway design from engineers in Thailand.

For a world of information about your ministry, why not hop on the information superhighway and have a look?

MoTH's Web site address is:
http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/bchighways/index.html

Next issue: The Intranet and you.

Highways Minister Harry Lali discusses VIHP's Mud Bay to Courtenay route with Stuart McAninch, crew foreman on a day labour project at Dove Creek. The minister took a progress inspection tour of the Inland Island Highway on July 16 with Comox Valley MLA Evelyn Gillespie.

Employee Recognition

Building A Better Public Service For British Columbians Program

Congratulations to Deb Hoy, formerly of Victoria's properties branch, for the successful design and implementation of the "Survey Roster Tracking System". This system is now used in the fair and equitable selection of B.C. land surveyors for ministry survey contracts.

The system tracks survey activity and file information, automatically calculates various data to provide cost comparisons and plan analysis for every assignment.

A conservative one-time cost avoidance of $150,000 and gross annual time-savings of $12,600 has been calculated and proven. After implementation costs were deducted, the net annual time-savings are worth $9,650. Cash awards, plaques and certificates were awarded Feb. 25. For her efforts, Hoy, now with construction and maintenance, was awarded $2,000. Former properties co-worker Steve Clark received $1,100.

The employee recognition program supports employee ideas and work process review projects that improve service to the public, operations and/or the work environment.

Cash awards of up to $2,000 per person are available for idea initiators, project team members and key supporters responsible for getting improvements to the "approved" stage.

Since 1990, net annual or one-time savings of $66 million have been achieved and awards exceeding $1 million have been paid.

Supervisors, managers and others are encouraged to seek recognition for co-workers who have had good ideas or been responsible for improvements.

For brochures, idea forms, and other information, contact:

Virginia Clark
Ministry recognition administrator

***Bottleneck** (cont'd from p. 1)*

modifying the interchange at United Boulevard and installing concrete barriers to separate Port Mann Bridge traffic from westbound Trans Canada and Lougheed Highway traffic.

In addition, widening Lougheed Highway near Coleman Avenue will provide a two-lane left turn onto a new ramp connecting the westbound Lougheed to the westbound Trans-Canada. A traffic control signal will be installed for left-turning traffic, and the current left turn from eastbound Lougheed to Coleman Avenue will be closed to improve safety. Finally, a direct connection to the Trans Canada westbound from the Mary Hill Bypass-United Boulevard intersection will be constructed next year.

Port Mann

The Port Mann Bridge will be modified to increase the number of lanes from four to five, by relocating main span maintenance walkways now on either side of the bridge to the outside of the steel arches and removing the existing walkways and widening the bridge deck on the concrete approach spans.

The new five-lane configuration will be slightly narrower than the other four—3.5 metres as opposed to 3.6 metres—but the lane will still be spacious compared to the 2.9 metre lanes on the Lions Gate Bridge.

While the additional lane will be the most visible change, the most expensive part of the Port Mann improvement project is the seismic upgrades being made to the structure. When finished, the bridge will be able to withstand an earthquake registering seven on the Richter scale. The added strength will be achieved by reinforcing some of the steel members on the arches, replacing some bearings on the approaches, strengthening some concrete columns, beams and footings, and densifying the soils at the base of the bridge that are now prone to liquefaction.

Looking ahead

Traffic management at Cape Horn requires long-term planning to ensure people and goods continue to move smoothly through this crucial transportation gateway in the Lower Mainland. The long term planning studies under way include the Cape Horn Area Network Study, the New Westminster Area Network Study, the South Fraser Perimeter Road Study and an additional Fraser River Crossing Study. Together, these studies will lead to an integrated network of major roads that will better serve communities on both sides of the Fraser River well into the future.

Adapted from an article in 'Innovation' magazine, by Paul Welsh and Brian Stone, P.Eng

Profile

Skipper sails into history

Submitted by Terry Christensen, marine manager

November 7 marks the one-year anniversary of the day Diane Roberts sailed into marine branch history. On that late-fall day one year ago, she guided the 58-metre M.V. *Omineca Princess* across Francois Lake, about 200 kilometres east of Prince George, and became the first woman to skipper a ministry ferry.

"It was a great day in my life," Roberts remembers. "I'm still very satisfied with this achievement and thankful to my family, friends and the many crewmates who shared my happiness."

Despite the fact that she was destined to become the ministry's first marine mate/relief captain, Roberts started her career with the marine branch in 1989 on the ground floor. She worked for eight years as a deckhand and oiler, performing engine room and night watch duties.

Skipper Diane Roberts, centre, surrounded by her crew, clockwise from left: Chris Buchli, Dave Batchelor, Rolf Knocke, Marinus Goossen, and Jon Mussick.

"Working as an auxiliary employee in both departments gave me a well-rounded knowledge of the vessel and all the related duties," Roberts says of her time aboard the *Princess*.

"None of my previous work experience involved ships, machinery or emergency duties," she says.

Nevertheless, in 1995, she enrolled at North Vancouver's Pacific Marine Training Institute under Capt. Barbara Howe.

"It meant a lot to me to have a female instructor," Roberts recalls. "I could see then that I was falling in line with other women who were experienced in this field."

She graduated from the course with her Master Minor Waters certificate, and by June 1996 was working as a relief mate.

One year and two job competitions later, she had landed a full-time mate's position.

"That's when the intense training really began," she says. "I needed to accumulate hours at the helm and docking experience in every weather condition to obtain a clearance assessment to work as a relief captain."

The work was demanding, but Roberts persevered.

"It didn't come easily," she allows. "I wasn't a natural boat handler."

However, she says she was fortunate to be working under the watchful eye of Capt. Dave Johnson, "who was willing to step aside from the wheel, offer patient guidance and let me advance at my own speed."

And now she is able to return the favour to other co-workers advancing through the ranks.

"I am now moving into an area where I can help train upcoming officers to the same standards," says the contented mariner.

...AND THEY'RRRRRRRR OFF!!!

Watch for your director and coworkers in the Victoria Provincial Employees Community Services Fundraiser "Horse Race" in mid-October.

For details, call PECSF Victoria chair Sharon Wilder at 356-5120 or check the MoTH Intranet site.

New Places, New Faces

The following individuals have been confirmed in new positions since July 1

Name	Department Description	Description	Effective Date
Ashbridge,Kelli L	R1 Elec Mtnce-Administration	District Office Manager	08-18
Bain,R A	HOVI R6 Shimizu's Crew Eng	Assistant Projects	07-22
Ballarin, Edoardo	HOEB Engineers In Training	Engineer in Training Civil	08-03
Bartle, Christopher	R5 Electrical, North West	Electrician	07-27
Brooks, Conan	R6 R/Mgr Ops Elect., Van. Is	TI Electrician	06-21
Casper, Dianne	HOHR Human Resources Branch	Manager Health and Safety	08-30
Chan, Brent R	HOIS ISB Application Services	Systems Analyst	05-31
Chang, Joyce Y	R1 R/Mgr Prof. Serv, S.Coast	Project Engineer	08-30
Connelly, Paul E	R4 Const. Servs., Central NE	Regional Paving Aide	07-26
Currie, Virginia	R4 Prop. Servs., Central NE	Manager Property Services	08-23
Davenport, Hali N	R4 N Peace(Ft St John) Admin	District Administrator	08-11
DeCastro, Roberto	R1 Electrical Eng Services	Traffic Systems Technician	06-14
Dennis, Sarah	R3 Geotech&Mat Eng Kootenays	Engineer in Training Geotech	06-14
Dupas, Jacques	R3 Cent. Koot (Nelson) Admin	District Highways Manager	07-05
Edmunds, Kurt D	R1 Howe Sound(N.Van) Admin	Sr District Development Tech	08-06
Eisbrenner, Bill	R4 Const. Servs., Central NE	Reg Geo & Mat Eng	07-01
Fam, James L	R1 Hwy & Traffic Engineering	Engineer in Training	07-12
Farynuk, Mike	HOVI R6 Couch's Crw, Van. Is	Engineering Assistant Projects	08-09
Fralick, James E	HOAR Aboriginal Relations	Sr Manager Strategic Planning	08-16
Gazdik, Anton R	R1 Prop Servs, South Coast	Supervisor Property Acq	07-28
Gladwell, Greg	HOMR Albion Ferry (New West)	Marine Mate	07-07
Gould, Dan	HOMP Major Projects	Manager Major Projects	06-21
Grieve, Darlene E	HOEX Adm Hwy Operations Dept	Briefing Note Clerk	07-26
Hallas, Mike	HOVI VIHP Project Services	Manager Financial Services	07-15
Hester, Jim	HOHP Dir, System Plan & Policy	Dir Systems Planning & Policy	08-04
Howe, Sandra L	R1 R/Mgr Prof. Serv, S.Coast	Project Engineer	08-30
Jablonski, Zbigniew	HOMR Albion Ferry (New West)	Marine Eng	07-21
Johnson, Kathleen E	R1 Howe Sound(N.Van) Admin	District Office Manager	08-01
Lindahl, Michael H	HOMR Albion Ferry (New West)	Marine Eng	07-22
Matsuda, Stan	HOVI R6 Deutsch's Crew Eng	Assistant Projects	07-22
McIntosh, Robert R	HOMR Albion Ferry (New West)	Marine Mate	07-07
Mooney, Shelly Anne	HOMR Albion Ferry (New West)	Marine Mate	08-17
Moore, W A	R5 Avalanche, North West	Snow Avalanche Technician	08-30
Moxon, Erin	R4 Geo & Mat Eng, Central NE	Engineer in Training Geotech	07-05
Neufeld, Lin	HOIS ISB Application Services	Data Access Admin Coordinator	07-12
Penner, Michael	R6 Bridge Eng., Van. Island	Regional Bridge Engineer	07-26
Ramsay, Donald M	R5 Skeena (Terrace) Admin	Reg Mgr Rehab Maint DHM	07-12
Ross, J Paul	HOFA Sr Mgr Financial Systems	Financial System Project Coord	07-12
Saxton, Michele C	HOMR Albion Ferry (New West)	Marine Clerk	08-01
Smith, Grant A	R1 Lwr Mainland(N.West)Admin	Area Manager Roads	07-28
Smith, Wally	R3 Project Mgmt., Kootenays	Regional Project Manager	07-15
Smurzynski,Wieslaw	HOMR Albion Ferry (New West)	Marine Mate	07-07
Thomsen, Michael	HOIS ISB Technology Services	Operations Analyst	07-14
Vickery, T	HOMR Albion Ferry (New West)	Marine Captain	08-16
Weir, Heather D	HOVI VIHP Project Services	Contract & Value Eng Coord	08-30
Wilder, Sharon J	HOAR Aboriginal Relations	Aboriginal Relations Officer	09-01
Wilson, Wayne	HOMR Albion Ferry (New West)	Marine Eng	08-01
Wiseman, Jeff	R3 Koot Bound(G Forks) Admin	District Highways Manager	08-23